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"On one occasion Backhouse reports (p. 81): 'On learning that plenty of provisions had arrived by the cutter, they [the natives] shouted for joy. After sunset they had a corrobery or dance round a fire, which they kept up till after midnight, in testimony of their pleasure.' 'The corrobory, or native dance, was their favourite pastime, and seemed to excite them considerably' (Melville, p. 348). Of these corrobories we have three separate detailed accounts, each account giving a different version of the dance.

According to Backhouse (p. 82): 'In these dances the aborigines represented certain events or the manners of different animals; they had a horse dance, an emu dance, a thunder and lightning dance, and many others. In their horse dance they formed a string, moving in a circle, in a half-stooping posture, holding by each other's loins, one man at the same time going along, as if reining in the others, and a woman as driver, striking them gently as they passed. Sometimes their motions were extremely rapid, but they carefully avoided treading one upon the other. In the emu dance they placed one hand behind them, and alternately put the other one to the ground and raised it above their heads, as they passed slowly round the fire, imitating the motion of the head of the emu when feeding. In the thunder and lightning dance they moved their feet rapidly, bringing them to the ground with great force, so as to produce a loud noise, and made such a dust as rendered it necessary for spectators to keep to windward of the group. Each dance

was ended with a loud shout, like a last effort of an exhausted breath. The exertion used made them very warm, and occasionally one or other of them would plunge into the adjacent lagoon. One of their chiefs stood by to direct them, and now and then turned to the bystanders and said, "Uarra coopa corrobery" --very good dance, -- evidently courting applause.'"

"Davies's account (p. 416) runs thus: 'Their principal amusement consists in their corroborries or dances. These are sometimes held in the day-time, but far more generally at night; they light a large fire, round which, quite naked, they dance, run, and jump, keeping time to their own singing, which is far from unmusical. These songs are various, each having its own peculiar dance, intended to illustrate some action or effect from causes. One is called the kangaroo dance, and is, along with some others, most violent; in this the party (I have [152] seen as many as ninety joined in one corroborie) commence walking round the fire slowly, singing in a low monotonous tone. After this has continued for some time, they begin to get excited, singing in a higher key, walking faster, striking their hands upon the ground, and springing high in the air. By degrees their walk becomes a run, then solitary leaps, a series; their singing, perfect shrieking; they close upon the fire, the women piling fresh branches upon it. Still leaping in a circle, and striking the ground with their hands at every bound, they will spring a clear five feet high, so near to the fire, so completely in the flames, that you fancy they must be burnt. Excited to frenzy, they sing, shriek, and jump, until their frames can stand it no longer, and they give up in the uttermost state of exhaustion. Some of their dances are evidently lascivious; some are medicine, etc.; though had I not been told by themselves that intended to represent making bread, taking such was the case, I never should have perceived any analogy.'"

"The following is Lloyd's account (pp. 49-50): 'The assembling of the tribes [at full moon] was always celebrated by a grand corroboree, a species of bestial bal masqué. On such occasions they presented a most grotesque and demon-like appearance; their heads, faces, and bodies, liberally greased, were besmeared alternately with clay and red ochre; large tufts of bushy twigs were entwined round their ankles, wrists, and waists; and these completed their toilet. They would then retire in a body to a short distance from the spot selected for the festive scene. At the extreme end of the tabooed space might be seen, squatted in Turkish fashion, the dark "Sultanas" of the respective tribes. When the preliminaries of fire-making and slightly brushing round the sacred spot were completed, forth strode...a sorry loquacious old beldame, taunting some noted warrior for his woman-like cowardice at the top of her screeching voice; in bitter terms challenging him to appear and answer to the charge.... Stung to the quick by her foul aspersions, he bounded in fierce rage through the midst of a flaming brushwood fire, proclaiming aloud with frantic gestures his many deeds in war and the exciting chase. When he paused from sheer exhaustion, the lay was taken up by his female admirers. They soon turned the tide against his wretched accuser, and in loud and solemn chant recounted and confirmed his heroic career. Their minor tones and monotonous voices they accompanied by playing upon greasy kangaroo rugs, which were rolled up in some

peculiar manner so that, when struck [153] by the open hand, the sound resembled that of a muffled drum. Others joined in the rude concert by beating time with two short dried sticks, and that with a precision adapted for an orchestra. Frequently, upon some inspiring allegretto movement of the thumping band, thirty or forty grim savages would bound successively through the furious flames into the sacred arena, looking like veritable demons, ... and after thoroughly exhausting themselves, by leaping in imitation of the kangaroo around and through the fire, they vanished in an instant. They were as rapidly succeeded by their lovely gins, who, at a given signal from the bellame speaker, rose en masse, and ranging themselves round the fresh-piled flames, in a state unadorned and genuine as imported into this world, contorted their arms, legs, and bodies into attitudes that would shame first-class acrobats. The grand point with each ... was to scream down her sable sister. Thus was the savage reunion kept up till one and two o'clock in the morning.'"